War Memories of a Teenage Freedom Fighter

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1971. General elections were held in Pakistan on 7 December 1970. At that time, Pakistan was under military rule. General elections were held during the military rule. At that time, the President of Pakistan was General Yahya Khan, a resident of West Pakistan. At that time, the total number of seats in the General Assembly of Pakistan, including the reserved seats, was 313. In this general election, the Awami League won 167 of the 313 seats in Pakistan. By winning 167 seats, the Awami League had gained an absolute majority. But the military rulers of Pakistan did not call on the Awami League to form a government. At one stage of the movement, on 7 March 1971, Awami League chief Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said at one point in his speech - "... This time struggle is our struggle for freedom; this time's struggle is our struggle for independence..."

After 11:30 pm on March 25, under the orders of Pakistan's military president General Yahya Khan, the East Pakistan military chief, Lieutenant General Tikka Khan, started various anti-human activities including burning. Due to the ambush of Pakistani soldiers, Bengali soldiers, E.P. R, police, Ansar and Awami League leaders and workers started an armed resistance war in the country. After 1:30 pm, the resistance war started on March 26. The great war of independence/liberation started on March 26, 1971. The great war of independence/liberation started on March 26, 1971, because our great independence and national day is March 26. I was then a student of the eighth grade of Ratan Kandi Adarsh Lower Secondary School. The atrocities of Pakistani soldiers started on the night of March 25, 1971. The Pakistani invaders named these heinous atrocities in the world "Operation Searchlight". They carried out arson, burning, torture, murder and other inhumane acts against sleeping Bengalis without trial.

After 25 March 1971, the Pakistani invading troops gradually set up camps in most parts of the country. Most of the leaders and workers of Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim League and other Islamic political parties, who lost the National Assembly elections held on 7 December 1970 and the Provincial Assembly elections on 17 December, sided with Pakistan. They formed Peach Committee, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams and other forces to support the Pakistani invading troops. Most of the Bihari residents of this country sided with the Pakistani soldiers. The West Pakistani soldiers had recruited some Bihari youths from West Pakistan as militias after giving them brief training to punish the Hindu and Awami League leaders and workers of East Pakistan. The Pakistani soldiers used to arrest and detain them all over the country. The Pakistani soldiers, with the help of their local friends, continued to commit various acts against humanity including arson, burning, killing, mass killings, torture, rape, forced conversion and extortion throughout the country. After 7 March '71, Pakistani Bihari soldiers continued to disarm the Bengali soldiers serving with them. Some Bengali soldiers fled with weapons or empty-handed.

The invaders had killed some of their fellow Bengali soldiers. The people of Peach Km, Razakars and other anti-independence groups would show the Pakistani soldiers the houses of Awami League leaders and activists and Hindus. They would show the Pakistani soldiers the roads and go to the villages. They would show which houses had gone to the liberation war. They would give information to the Pakistani invaders, loot houses, set fire to them and set fire to them. The nation was shocked to see their cruelty. Every day I knew about the atrocities of the Pakistani soldiers from various eyewitnesses. At that time, schools and colleges were closed. Most of the employees and others in our area who were working in Dhaka and other cities came to our houses to save their lives. From them and others, I learned about the brutality of the Pakistani forces. To prevent the Pakistani soldiers from crossing the Aricha-Nagar Bari ferry ghat and entering North Bengal, the freedom fighters of Pabna city and other nearby police stations and villages took up positions by bunkering at Nagar Bari Ghat. But the bombing of the Pakistani soldiers forced the freedom fighters of Nagar Bari Ghat to abandon their positions. They retreated and came to Paikar Hati (now Shaheed Nagar in Dub Bagan) and took up positions by bunkering.

The Pakistani soldiers took a ferry from Aricha Ghat to Nagar Bari Ghat and marched to capture Pabna, Bogra and other cities of North Bengal.

On 19 April '71, the freedom fighters fought with the Pakistani soldiers in Dab Bagan. This battle was led by E.P. and Ali Akbar, the son of Subedar Comilla. In this battle, the freedom fighters could not stand up to the heavy weapons of the Pakistani soldiers. Several freedom fighters were martyred in this battle. To cooperate with the freedom fighters, many people from Bera, Santhia, Shahjadpur and other police stations brought dry food and gave it to the freedom fighters. I and my villager Md. Abul Kalam Sarkar and others went to Dab Bagan with boiled eggs, chira, and muri given by the people of our village. In the Dab Bagan battle, the freedom fighters lost the battle with the Pakistani soldiers and hid in various places. Kalam and I walked from Dab Bagan through the fence and went home. The freedom fighters of Sirajganj district took up positions to fight resistance by making bunkers on the north side of Baghabari Ghat. On April 24, Pakistani soldiers came to the south side of Baghabari Ghat and fired two powerful mortar or cannon shots. One of these cannon or mortar shots hit a village called Dia. This shot damaged a cow in Dia village. Another shot hit near a village called Narina. At that time, there was no bridge on the Baral river in Baghabari. To resist the Pakistani soldiers, the independence fighters of Sirajganj district, Bengali soldiers, EPR, Ansar, Awami League leaders and workers had taken up positions in bunkers on the north side of Baghabari Ghat. Sirajganj was then a subdivision of Pabna district. The subdivision administrator, Mr. A.K. Shams Uddin, was under the leadership of the independence fighters. On April 24, the mortar or cannon shots of Pakistani soldiers created panic in the area. The resistance fighters who had taken up positions in bunkers on the north side of Baghabari Ghat hid in the village by hiding in the bunkers. On the morning of April 25, Pakistani soldiers came to the north side of the river by ferry.

From the other side, some soldiers came by train to Ullapara station via Ishwardi. Some soldiers from Bogra Army Cantonment marched towards Baghabari Ghat. On April 25, the Pakistani army went up to Chandai Kona, firing artillery and setting fire to various houses and shops on both sides of the road. In the evening, they returned from Chandai Kona and set fire to various houses and shops in Shahjadpur Sadar. Everyone was ordered to

loot and take away all the goods including the houses and shops of Hindus. On receiving the orders of the Pakistani soldiers, anti-independence and bad youths from various villages of Shahjadpur police station looted and took away the houses and shops of Hindus located in Shahjadpur, Dwariapur Bazar, Manirampur Bazar and other places. Seeing the terrible torture and burning of the Pakistani army all over the country and in Shahjadpur, Shahjadpur's Awami League, Maulana Saifuddin Yahia Khan Majlish Sir came forward with a plan to possibly save Hindus and others. Pakistani invading soldiers committed a massacre in a village called Chariya of Ullapara police station on 25 April '71. The identities of 129 Hindu and Muslim men and women killed in this massacre have been found. A few days later, Pakistani soldiers committed a mass murder in Kan Sona Ghosh Para due to the conspiracy of an anti-independence activist in Ullapara. In this massacre of Kan Sona village, 7 men and women were tortured and killed. Those killed by Pakistani invading soldiers in this mass murder are - Bhola, Sushil, Rabindra, Bhavesh, Ramendra, Suroj Bala and Basanti Ghosh. On that day, some houses in Ghosh Para of Kan Sona village were set on fire. Most of the Peach Committee members across the country, anti-independence activists, have cooperated with Pakistani soldiers in torturing Bengalis in various ways.

The head of our Shahjadpur Thana Peach Committee was Maulana Saifuddin Ehia Khan Majlish. He was a Pir clan member. He was a very good person. He was a Muslim League leader and made a special contribution to the independence movement of Pakistan in 1947. He established several hospitals, colleges and other educational and social service institutions in Shahjadpur. He contested against Awami League candidate Md. Abdur Rahman in the 1970 provincial council elections. At that time, the Bengalis of East Pakistan voted for the Awami League nominated candidate to respond to the oppression and atrocities of West Pakistanis for more than 23 years. That is why Maulana Sahib could not get elected despite being a very good person. On April 25, various anti-human activities including arson, burning and looting were going on in Shahjadpur under the leadership of Pakistani soldiers. We believe that Maulana Sahib was very distressed by this. He contacted the Pakistani non-Bengali Major and joined them in a strategy to protect the Awami League, Hindus and others of Shahjadpur. He could speak Urdu well. He protected the people of

Shahjadpur in various ways according to his ability. If he had not kept in touch with the Bihari Major, the Shahjadpur police station might have suffered more. The Pakistani soldiers would determine whether a young man was a Hindu or a Muslim by looking at his gender by removing his pants or lungi. When a young Hindu was identified as a Hindu by the Pakistanis, Maulana Sahib would explain to them in Urdu, 'Methar Hai'. A methar would clean up feces, urine and other impurities and explain this to the soldiers in Urdu. Saying this, he would let the Hindus go. One day in early July 1971, our villager Md. Nazrul Islam went to Shahjadpur to see the situation in Shahjadpur. He was captured by the Pakistani army.

Pakistani soldiers detained him and 10/12 youths from 10 am to 8 pm. After receiving the news, Maulana Sahib came after 7 pm and convinced the Major to release everyone. Md. Nazrul Islam Bhai later said about his capture and release by Pakistani soldiers one day - Pakistani soldiers determined the gender of all our youths as Hindus or Muslims. He said to most of us - "Take off your clothes", then asked - "Are you Muslim?", "Tell us four words". "Who is Malaun?" "Who is Mukti?" "Who is Mukti? Who is Mukti? Who is she going to?" Maulana Sahib convinced the Pakistani soldiers and released all of us. At the end of April, Pakistani soldiers from Bagha Bari camp entered the village of Pontajia and looted, tortured women and set fire to it. Pakistani soldiers first came from Bagha Bari camp to a village called Madla. The people of the village started fleeing. Seeing and hearing the situation in Madla village, the people of Pontajia village also started fleeing. Pakistani soldiers ran through the field and arrested most of them and made them stand near the Pontajia Kali house. In this village, they tortured Hasio Roji, who had come from Pabna and taken shelter in this village. After that, they tortured a newly pregnant housewife of this village with her full name. They ransacked the entire village in search of Bulbuli, a girl from Ghosh Para. In early May, Pakistani soldiers went to Briangaru village and first attacked the house of Abdul Bari Azad (Majnu) member. They had information that Awami League MNA Syed Hossain Mansur Tara Mia was there. But the Pakistani soldiers did not find him and searched the house of Fakir Chand nearby. On May 8, they raided the house of Megha Thakur in Karanja village of Sathiya police station in Pabna district, looted and set fire to the house with petrol. Magha

Thakur tortured and killed 8 people in that village, including 3 people from the house.

On May 14, Demra (Bausgari-Ruposi) massacre took place. Seven of my relatives lost their lives in the Demra-Bausgari Ruposi massacre. They are - 1. Prabodh Kumar Majumdar (Mona Majumdar) 2. His brother-in-law Lalu Chakraborty of Bamun village. Both people were sons-in-law of our family. My grandfather's own son-in-law. 3. Ram Jagannath Roy, 4. Balaram Roy, 5. Dilip Kumar Roy, 6. Nirmalendu Roy, 7. Amalendra Nath Roy killed more than four hundred Hindus, Muslim men, women and children along with these seven of my relatives in this massacre.

On May 18, a massacre took place in a village called Sial Kol under Kamar Khand police station in Sirajganj district. In this massacre, 1. Yogendra Narayan Basak, a teacher at Gyandayini High School in Sirajganj, 2. His grandfather (elder brother) Nani Gopal Basak, 3. nephew Pranab Kumar Basak, 4. Shiv Charan Ravidas, 5. Shuk Charan Ravidas, 6. Phanindra Nath Rabi Das and 7. Prem Nath Das were brutally killed by Pakistani soldiers.

The situation in the country was terrible. Pakistani soldiers surrounded one village after another at night along the known routes of the anti-independence forces and carried out mass killings from dawn to dusk. They looted and looted with the help of local anti-independence collaborators. They set houses and shops on fire and burned them. After the Operation Search Light on March 25, many Awami League leaders and activists and Hindus took refuge in India to save their lives. Most of the farmers, workers, students and other men and women of this country joined the liberation war with Bengali soldiers, EPR, Ansar and other trained forces. It was not possible for the Bengalis to rise after fighting against the professionally trained Pakistani soldiers equipped with modern weapons. Bengali soldiers and others took refuge in India for training, weapons and other assistance. We had to come to our village across the Karatoya River. Without a waterway, Pakistani soldiers would not be able to come to the village. The Muslims of our village are very good. The head of our village, Dr. Md. Zainul Abedin Sarkar (Jatu Doctor), Vice Principal Md. Nurul Haque Sarkar, Chemist Md. Nazrul Islam Sarkar, Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman, Md. Abdul Sarkar, Maulvi Mohammad Hossain, Md. Shah Alam Master, Md.

Abdul Majid Sarkar, Md. Abul Kalam, Md. Akbar Ali Mollah, Md. Yunus Master, Md. Akbar Ali Pramanik, along with the leading Muslims of the village, the Muslim youth and possible others, called and said - "You all know the terrible situation in the whole country. No matter where you go in the whole country, everyone will see that no harm should come to the Hindus of our village. Hindus are our trust.... We will be fully alert to protect the Hindus of our village." Not a single person in our village was a member of the Peach Committee, a Razakar or an opponent of independence. All the Muslims provided various security to the Hindus. Since ancient times, Hindus and Muslims have lived together in this village. When various adversities arise, the Muslims provide security to the Hindus in various ways. Our village is a unique village of communal harmony in the world.

During the Liberation War, most of the Hindus of the village, fearing the Pakistani soldiers, had left their gold ornaments and other valuables in the houses of their Muslim neighbors. After the Victory Day of Bangladesh, the Muslim neighbors had returned all the gold ornaments and other valuables they had entrusted to them intact. After the Demra massacre, we started guarding the village day and night. The Muslim youths of the neighborhood stayed with us for our support. On the instructions of the elders, all of them, Md. Abdul Majid Sarkar, Abul Kalam Sarkar, Golam Mahbub Nannu, Abdus Chattar Pramanik, Anaimolla, Iman Ali, Nazrul Islam, Lal Mia. Shamsul Haque and others took turns guarding us day and night. Our family used to take shelter in the houses of our Muslim neighbors for a few nights. The Muslims of our village were so kind that they left their houses and beds for us and slept on the veranda themselves. At that time, our family consisted of 8 members: 1. Our father Dwijendra Nath Sanyal 2. Mother Goddess: Neelima Rani Sanyal, 3. Elder Grandfather Debendra Nath Sanyal (Sukumar) 4. Elder Aunt- Mrs. Rekha Rani Sanyal, 5. Grandfather-Samarendra Nath Sanyal (Bhavesh) 6. Me 7. Younger Brother-Saumendra Nath Sanyal (Shamen) and 8. Only younger sister Dulali Rani Sanyal.

We left our village for a few days and took shelter in the house of Makhan Lal Singh, a disciple of our father God, in Bachra village, which is in a more remote area than our village. Alone in my heart, I decided to participate in the Liberation War. How long can we stay in people's homes? In the beginning of the month of Ashadh, our family returned to our village home.

We and other youths of our village, on our own initiative, kept guarding the village day and night. And we kept looking for the way to the Liberation War. The first part of the month of Shrawan. The days were 6 Shrawan 1378 and 23 July '71 Friday. The rainy season. At around 8 pm, I saw a six-masted boat in the Paleder Beel near our house. Seeing the boat, I went ahead. I saw my acquaintance Md. Abdul Wahab from Bachra village. I asked. What will happen? Wahab said MPA. Mr. Md. Abdur Rahman Sir is taking the willing people of the area to India for training in the Liberation War. I said then I will also go. I went home. I secretly packed my clothes. Then I tore a page from my study notebook and wrote a note addressed to my mother. The note was- “Mother, take my bow, give my bow to father. Give my bow to elder brother, grandfather and grandmother. Give my love to younger brothers and sisters. I went to the Liberation War. When you asked me to go, I refused to let you go, but I said no. Forgive my sins. Bless me. May I return to you victorious. This is your son Devesh.” The day was the market day in our village. Pitrudev has brought good fish from the market, Matridevi is cooking. And after a while, she will call us all for dinner.

I secretly went to the boat without telling anyone at home. At around 8:30 pm, M.P.A. Mr. Md. Abdur Rahman Sir came in a boat with a few people including Razzak and Ershad Bhai of Shahjadpur. Seeing M.P.A. Sir, I went forward to meeting him. Standing in front, I greeted him. Seeing me, Sir said, "Debesh, why are you here? You won't take such a young person to the liberation war." I requested. M.P.A. Sir said, "Okay, let's go." Then our boat left Ratan Kandi Paleder Beel Ghat at around 9:00 pm. I mentally bowed to God. The journey of a teenager's life to war began. We crossed the Padma River via Sujanagar Sat Bariya and crossed the border of Kharijathak village in Chilmari Union of Daulatpur Police Station in Kushtia district and crossed the border of Bangladesh through Kharijathak village. We entered India through the Jalangi border of West Bengal, India. We entered a BSF camp. We had breakfast and washed our hands and faces.

At the BSF camp, the MPA sir and our guide were allowed to sit on chairs. He made us all stand in line. We were counted. There were 22 of us. Out of these 22 people, there were 2 of us from our village. 1. Sunil Kumar Hazra and 2. Me. Sunil Kumar Hazra had returned to the country after hearing

about the horrors of participating in the Liberation War and other things. The MPA Sir contacted us and arranged for us to be admitted to the Kamar Para Youth Camp. The MPA sir went with us to Malda. He bought muri and kathal from the Malda market and fed us. Then, after arranging for us to be admitted to the Kamar Para Youth Camp for training in the Liberation War, he left for Kolkata for the temporary Bangladesh government in exile. We reached the Kamar Para Youth Camp around 9 pm. They arranged for our accommodation and food. The next morning, they followed us all. Due to my young age, the training authorities did not admit me. Helpless, I left for the house of Mr. Vishwanath Bhattacharya behind my old Maldaha. At that time, most Indians called the people of Bangladesh "Jai Banglar Lok". Bangladeshi people did not have to pay any fare in Indian trains and buses. If they asked for fare in buses and trains, they would understand that we were refugees from Bangladesh by saying "Jai Bangla".

I took a bus from Kamarpara Youth Camp to a nearby railway station. After that, I took a train. I had to change trains from Barsoi Railway Junction Station. I was sitting at the station. I did not have a train ticket. The mobile court people took me and made me sit in a room. The magistrate called those who did not have train tickets one by one and fined them. My turn came one by one. When they asked me my name, I said “Joy Bangla”. They understood that I had left Bangladesh. They let me go without finding me. I took the next train and got off at Old Malda station and went to the house of Mr. Shri Bishwanath Bhattacharya in Shak Mohan Mohalla. I visited my relatives’ houses in Old Malda, Ghazal, Siliguri and Jalpaiguri for a few days. Behind me, one of Mr.’s brothers-in-law was in charge of a refugee camp. He advised me- “You are a young man; you do not need to go to the Liberation War. I am admitting you to a refugee camp. You will get a place to stay in the camp, ration and all other facilities”. I could not agree to come to India from Bangladesh to participate in the Liberation War and eat sitting in a refugee camp. I returned to Kamarpara Youth Camp. I met some people including Rabindra Nath Bagchi, Md. Nazrul Islam and Ratan Kumar Das of Shahjadpur. They advised me to go to Professor Abu Sayyid Sir, in charge of Malancha (Kurmail) Camp, advisor of Sector No. 7 and M.N. of Bera-Santhiia constituency. On their advice, I went to Professor Abu Sayyid Sir. I introduced myself to him and requested him to arrange for me to be

admitted to the Liberation War. He arranged for me to be admitted to Kamarpara Youth Camp.

I also made a special request to the Kamarpara Youth Camp admission authority to admit me. The authority questioned me on various issues. They admitted me after listening to my patriotism, bravery and other things. In the primary training camp, we were made to follow the national anthem, singing the PT parade. After staying at the Kamarpara Youth Camp for a few days, I, Rabindra Nath Bagchi, Ratan Kumar Das and Md. Nazrul Islam were transferred to the Malancha (Kurmail) transit camp, from the Malancha (Kurmail) transit camp we were brought to the Patiram primary training camp. From the Patiram primary training camp, 20/22 of us were brought in an Indian Army lorry for higher training to the Indian Army training camp called Panighata in Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district. They took us to the camp and gave us seats to stay in the tents. Each of us was given a mug, a plate, two pairs of pants, two shirts, a mosquito net, and a bed sheet. The training started. On the day of the training, the training coordinator first followed up and explained the various rules and regulations of the training and other matters. Then he said that the training head Captain D.S. Villon Sir would come at 12:00 noon. Exactly at 12:00 noon, the training head Captain D.S. Villon Sir of the Sikh Army came. What he said to all of us in Hindi meant- "... I salute you. You are heroes, you have come to train to fight to free your motherland from the invaders. We cannot do much for you. We will provide humanitarian aid, training, and weapons. You have to liberate your country yourself. I salute your birth parents. They sent their children to the liberation war for the country..." The Panighata training camp was a higher training camp under Sector No. 7. Panighata place was a forest area surrounded by mountains on all sides. This forest area was inhabited by monkeys, Naxals and other bad people. The place was a forest area on the south side of a canal coming down from the Karshiyan hills. Our training place was located on the south side of the canal flowing in the east-west direction. On the left side of the Chan Mari place, a spring water came down from the mountain. This was the first time in my life that I saw spring water coming down from the mountain. Mortar training was conducted on the banks of the south side of the canal. The mortar bullets fell into the forest on the north side of the canal. We had 21 days of training. We were given training on K-3 rifle, L, MG, S, L,

R, Stengun, Twinch mortar, hand grenade charge, use of explosives, first aid and other things. They gave us an idea about what to do if a fellow soldier is injured or martyred in war and about first aid. A few Indian Hindu Bihari and Sikh soldiers trained our company. Our company was called Delta Company. The chief trainer was Sikh Army Captain D.S. Villon. Before the departure of the freedom fighters wearing F.F., the F.F. number was written on the slate with chalk, and a photograph was taken holding it on the chest. But before the departure of the trainees of our company, it rained for a few days. Due to weather conditions, they could not take our photograph. At the time of departure, I came to know that my F.F. No. was 4742. After the training, I, Rabindra Nath Bagchi, Md. Nazrul Islam and Ratan Kumar Das and about 50 others were brought to the headquarters of Sector No. 7, Tarangpur, in Kaliaganj police station, West Bengal, in an Indian Army truck. It was in a place called Tarangpur in Kaliaganj police station, West Bengal. A guerrilla group was formed in Tarangpur by bringing a few people from Sirajganj district. Mr. M.A. Mannan of Tamai village in Belkuchi police station was appointed as the group leader/commander of our group.

Babu Rabindra Nath Bagchi, a resident of Jamirta village of Shahjadpur police station, was appointed as the deputy leader/commander. We were given arms, ammunition, rations and pocket money from Tarangpur. A three-knot three rifle, a magazine and a belt of bullets, a bayonet and a helmet were issued in my name. Other ammunition, mines, grenades and explosives were given to the commander sir. There was no guarantee that death would not happen. So, to prepare for death and win the war, I bought a Sri Sri Chandi book, a Bangladesh national flag with a map of Bangladesh and a 4-band radio from Tarangpur market. I took a bus from Tarangpur to Kaliaganj and boarded a train. We had to change trains at Siliguri Railway Junction Station. I was sitting with everyone in the group on the platform of Siliguri station. I saw an empty train standing in front of our platform. I entered the toilet on the train to try it. In such a state, the train started. I got scared. I hurriedly came out of the toilet and jumped down onto the platform. My knee hurt. Today I think about it - I had no ID card in my pocket at that time. It was an unfamiliar place. Not a single person there knew me. If I died, even my companions would not have been able to find me. There was no certainty whether my body would be buried or cremated. My parents had been looking for me all their lives. They would not have

found my body either. Later, I changed trains and boarded a train bound for Assam. We got off at a station called Dhupari on the Assam-bound train. Then I took a bus to Manikar Char. Since it was getting dark, I stayed at a rented boarding house in Manikar Char for the night. The next morning, we crossed the river from Manikar Char and came to the Roumari Freedom Fighter Training Center established in the free zone of the then Kurigram subdivision (now the district) of Rangpur district. We bathed and ate at the Roumari camp. Our commander Sir hired a big six-wheeled boat to reach the free zone of Sirajganj district up the Jamuna. After having dinner from the Roumari camp, our boat left at around 9:00 pm. This was 6 September '71. The boat had to come through Bahadurabad Ghat, Jagannathganj Ghat, Kazipur Thana and other risky areas.

We came to know that Bahadurabad Ghat is a very dangerous area. The Pakistani soldiers and Razakars of that camp are terrible. They use speed boats to sail the river at night. When they find the freedom fighters' boats, they take them away. They take them to the camp and brutally torture them. Our commander Mr. M.A. Mannan, Sir, ordered - "All of you stay in position in the boat's deck. If the Pakistani invaders come to catch us, we will not be caught. We will fight. We will be martyred in the fight. But we will not be caught by them". Around 2.00 am, we started crossing the Bahadurabad Ghat area. The light of their searchlights was coming and falling on our boat repeatedly. By the grace of God, they did not come to catch us with speed boats. We crossed the Bahadurabad Ghat area. We had some jaggery with us. In the morning, the boatmen put the boat into a kaisa field. We went down and defecated in the field. We had breakfast with the chira and jaggery we had with us. After that, the boat left again. At that time, most of the areas of Kazipur police station, including most of Bangladesh, were under the control of the Pakistani invaders. Our boat would come in front of Kazipur police station. After looking around and searching, the boat stopped and stopped for 4 days and reached the Jamuna Char, a free territory of Sirajganj. This was near the Singhuri Char in Tangail district. There was a cooking facility on the boat.

The boatmen would cook some kind of dal bhaat or khichuri and feed us. We continued without eating in this way. The next night we went to the other side of the Jamuna River. We went to the village house of Mr. Md.

Abdul Momin Talukdar, MNA of Belkuchi-Kamarkhand constituency. He was not at home at that time. His brother Md. Rashid Talukdar helped us with food and other matters. Until October '71, the commander sir did not decide to fight head-on because the number of freedom fighters in our group was small. I came to know from the commander sir that Mr. freedom fighter Md. Amir Hossain Bhulu's group and a few other freedom fighter groups were in our area. We used to carry out guerrilla operations "hit and run" (hit and run) to keep the Pakistani invading soldiers and their allies in fear. When we went near the Pakistani soldiers or Razakar camps, we would fire blank shots into the air from our 2/4 three-knot three rifles. Pakistani brokers, people from the Peach Committee and others would be afraid and terrified when they knew about our existence. First, our job was to keep them in fear and terror. In most places across the country, the Razakars would go to villages and forcefully bring back cattle, chickens and other things.

They used to go to the market and loot and extort. Our group conducted two operations to catch the Razakars who came to the market to extort. We used to hide in schools or in someone's house during the day. During the Liberation War, there were two sides inside the country. One was for independence. The other was against independence. Most of the people in our working area were for independence. The members of the Peach Committee against independence, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams and others. The opponents of independence used to bring Pakistani soldiers to the houses with information about the participants in the Liberation War and set fire to them, looted and extorted. They would capture the owners of the houses that sheltered the freedom fighters and torture and kill them. Hindu and Awami League leaders were their big targets. They would capture Hindu men and women. They would torture, rape and kill them. In different places, the freedom fighters also killed the oppressive Pakistani brokers and Razakars.

There was a plan to hand over to the firing squad any Pakistani invading soldier who was directly involved in genocide, rape and other acts against humanity. That is why in most freedom fighter groups, a brave person was nominated as the executioner. The executioner of our group was Md. Shamsul Haque, a freedom fighter from Daulatpur village. We could not

catch any such Pakistani invading soldier. We never killed anyone. The policy of our group was - "We will not kill any of our countrymen. We will convince them to support independence" that is why our freedom fighter group did not catch, punish or kill any anti-independence person. We tried to convince the anti-independence people in various ways through ourselves or through their relatives. Despite having firearms in our hands, we were afraid at every moment. Pakistani soldiers could attack us at any time. There was no guarantee of food we had. We did not have any dishes to cook and eat ourselves. We used to stay in this shelter today and that shelter tomorrow. We used to listen to the “Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra” on the radio I bought from Tarangpur Bazar. Every night, Commander Sir would give us the password. Before the Kota attack, he would decide which shelter we would gather in if we got separated in the war. We would not stay in any shelter for more than a few days. Sometimes, due to the lack of shelter in some houses, we would have to stay up all night eating jaggery and sleeping on the school bench. We did not have any mosquito nets, pillows, blankets and other things. What an inhuman hardship. We would guard our shelters in turns, two by two. When the duty of one group was over, they would wake up the next two to stand on duty. It was very difficult for me to wake up and stand on guard.

Every night, Commander Sir would give us a side ward. When we were on shelter duty, if someone came, we would say “halt”. Then we would say “hands up”. After that, we would let them go without asking questions and make sure. At night, we would go to the houses of various Razakars and explain to their relatives. In the morning, we would shoot our weapons full-through, clean them and oil them. At that time, most of the people in the country were in favor of independence. We would eat and drink at each person’s house every day. Many people did not dare to give us shelter or food due to fear of the opponents of independence. Because in most villages, there were 2/1 Pakistani brokers and Razakars. If they found out, they would inform the neighboring army or Razakar camp and bring them and burn the houses, capture the owners of the houses, kill them and torture them. We always had a lot of trouble with us. A few days after our group arrived in Bangladesh, we took leave from the group. I came to my village home, Ratan Kandi village under Shahjadpur police station, to find out the news about everyone, including my father and mother.

When I arrived at the village house, I saw that our entire house had been sold to Md. Hossain Ali of the village for a large sum of money and our entire family had gone to India in search of me. I took shelter in the house of our neighbor and friend Nani Gopal Haldar. I met Md. Hossain Ali. He said, "Your parents have gone crazy for you, so they have sold your entire house to me on a small condition and gone to India to look for you. They have taken some money as per the condition. When the country is free, if you return my money, I will return the house and everything else." I stayed at Nani Gopal Haldar's house at night. Nani Gopal and I spent the whole night almost sleepless. Nani Gopal heard from me everything about becoming a freedom fighter. He told me that on the west bank of the Shahjadpur wooden bridge, Pakistani soldiers tortured a Hindu girl and shot her dead in the water of the Jola that passed in front of Rabindranath Tagore's Kachari house.

There is a tyrant Razakar named Md. Mujibur Rahman in Shahjadpur. Under his leadership, looting, torture and other anti-human acts are being carried out in various areas including Shahjadpur Sadar. A young girl named Manorama Kundu (Mono) from Giridhari Kundu in Shahjadpur was kidnapped by a Razakar named Md. Mon Sarkar and forcibly converted to Islam and kept in his house. On September 1, 1971, at around 3 am, Hitendra Nath Chanda was kidnapped from his house, tortured and shot dead by the leadership of the Kaijuri Razakar camp. The killers left his body on the road.

Four Razakar camps have been established in Shahjadpur police station. 1. Shahjadpur Sadar Razakar Camp 2. Koijuri Razakar Camp 3. Kar Shalika Razakar Camp and 4. Porjana Razakar Camp. Shahjadpur Razakar Camp is being run as per the instructions of Pakistani soldiers and others. Koijuri Razakar Camp is controlled by Barrister Md. Korban Ali. Barrister Md. Korban Ali is a big leader of Jamaat-e-Islami. He contested for the post of MNA from Shahjadpur constituency as a nominated candidate of Jamaat-e-Islami. He lost the contest to Awami League candidate Syed Hossain Mansur Tara Mia. From the Koijuri Razakar camp, Razakars raided Beltoil village and looted many houses of Hindus. They captured two brothers named Anil and Sunil Ghosh from Beltoil Bazar and took them to Koijuri

and tortured and killed them inhumanly. Our Bhairab Para's Narayan Chandra Sarkar was killed by his enemies. The day Narayan Chandra Sarkar was killed was the day of our Ratan Kandi village's hat bar. Friday. Around 5 pm, 5/6 freedom fighters came and caught Narayan Chandra Sarkar from the fish market. This group included our village's freedom fighter Md. Shamsul Haque. Perhaps this group had taken a deal to kill Narayan Chandra Sarkar by taking money from some enemy of his.

That day, Narayan Chandra Sarkar was buying Hilsa fish from the market. He had Hilsa fish in his hand. 5/6 people from the killing team threatened him with rifles and other weapons and blindfolded him. The people of the market requested him not to kill him. But the contract killers did not listen to anything. They took him away while he was walking blindfolded. Md. Shamsul Haque of that group was married to Md. Icha Sarkar of our village. With self-confidence, Md. Icha Sarkar took a few more people with him and followed them, requesting them to release Narayan Chandra Sarkar. But the killers might have had a contract to kill him in exchange for a specific amount of money. When they went near Jigar Bariya village, the killers pointed their weapons at them and told them - you go, it is not possible to release Narayan Chandra Sarkar. Md. Icha Sarkars returned helplessly. Upon hearing the news that Narayan Chandra Sarkar had been taken away, his widowed mother, wife and helpless children went crying to search for him. The killers shot him dead in a field between Jigar Bariya and Hasakola villages and left his body behind. The sound of gunfire was heard by people in Jigar Bariya village and nearby Hasakola. Narayan Chandra Sarkar was a very strong and well-built man. After he was shot, his nose rose 2/3 of his hand and he fell to the ground. After some time, he died after suffering from a concussion. It has been a few days since Pakistani soldiers and Razakars, in collaboration with the anti-independence elements, massacred him in Lahiri Para of Lahiri Mohan Pur village under Ullapara police station. Most of the Hindu men and women were tortured and killed in this mass murder.

After the massacre, the local people were forced to pile up the bodies next to the Dahkula railway line of the nearby Lahiri Mohanpur station. Ataur Rahman of Maharaj Purgram became the commander of the Porjana Razakar camp. They inhumanly tortured and later killed the wealthy businessman Manindra Nath Ghosh of Porjana village. I was scared after

listening to various scary stories from Nani Gopal Haldar all night. I heard that Md. Osman Ali of Karigar Para and Md. Abdur Rahim and Md. Abdur Rahman of Dakshin Para of our village were trying to join Razakar. Md. Baina Sarkar of Karigar Para contacted Commander Mao Md. Abdul Khalek of the Karshalika Razakar camp and joined the Razakar. He had been living in Karshalika village for a few days. After hearing the news of my arrival in the village, my friend Md. Abdul Kalam Sarkar and a few others came to see me. They said they wanted to join the liberation war. Various good and bad thoughts came to my mind. Without delaying any further in the village, I set off for my freedom fighter group. I set off from Ratan Kandi's house and walked around 1.00 pm and reached the house of our elder brother Dwijendra Nath Chakraborty in Mukand Ganti village of Belkuchi police station.

I went and stood in the courtyard of the house. Seeing me, that gentleman came out of the house. He quickly made me sit inside the house. He made me sit on the bed in the big house. After this, that gentleman said - Father, your parents and others have all gone to India for you. Your parents have almost gone crazy because of you. Your stay in our house is full of risks. A member of our house and a few others have become Razakars. The Razakars come to our house every day. They inquire whether any relatives have come to the house. If they see you, they will arrest you. My mother gave me food in the big house. Katta, Devkumar, Tapati, Nirmal and others came and saw me. I ate quickly and bowed to Katta, that gentleman and my mother, and left the village quickly through the artisan's house. Then I walked and joined my group located in a village called Boyra Masum under Belkuchi police station. My commander, sir, took some Awami League leaders and workers with us for training. My father and mother were almost mad because I was going to the Liberation War.

A war against Pakistani soldiers by an ignorant teenage boy! To find me and bring me back from the war and save me from the genocide at the hands of the Razakars' ultimatum, the entire family sold their house on terms and took great risks and took shelter in the Manikar Char refugee camp in Assam, India. We used to do Reiki before any attack. "Jai Bangla" was the main slogan of our battlefield. I had taken 2 days' leave from the Group Commander and went to Shankar Pasha village of Santhia police

station. Shankar Pasha was our aunt's house. Our grandfather's (mother-in-law's father) house was in a village called Pecha Kola near Nakalia of Bera police station. Our grandfather's name was Shri Ajit Chakraborty. Our Messo Mahashay was Dr. Amal Chandra Roy and Aunty Suniti Rani Chakraborty. I stayed at Aunty Mahashay's house one day and left the next day. Messo Mahashay and Aunty did not want to let me come at all.

Mashima said- “Father, you are a small man, you cannot fight with the terrible Pakistani soldiers. Your parents have almost gone crazy for you; you stay here with us”. I bowed to Mesho Mahasoy and Mashima and walked towards our group and joined the village next to Boyra Masum village of Belkuchi police station. I had told my group commander and comrades on the battlefield- “If I die on the battlefield, wrap my body in the national flag I bought from Tarangpur market and throw it into the river”. When I died on the battlefield of the Liberation War, there was no family member in Bangladesh to take my body to cremate and perform the funeral rites. If I died on the battlefield, there was no way to take my body to the village. I participated in the front/guerrilla war under two group commanders. One- Group Commander Mr. M.A. Mannan and two Deputy Group Commanders (appointed as Group Commanders) Babu Rabindra Nath Bagchi. Under Group Commander M.A. Mannan Sir, 1. Belkuchi Thana Operation 2. Ambush near Kalia Haripur Railway Station and 3. Kalyanpur Battle of Belkuchi Thana (now Upazila). Dhitpur Battle under the command of Babu Rabindra Nath Bagchi. Details of the guerrilla/front battles of our group are as follows:

1.

Belkuchi Thana Operation: Belkuchi is a notable police station in Sirajganj district. This police station operation was led by Group Commander Mr. M.A. Mannan Sir. On 24 October '71, under the guidance of Commander Sir and 3 other people, we simultaneously attacked Belkuchi Thana and the house of Muslim League leader Md. Abdul Matin. In the evening, Commander Sir gave a detailed briefing at the Bania Gati shelter. Commander Sir had divided our group into two groups. It was decided that the larger group led by Commander Sir would attack the police station. The other group led by Rabindra Nath Bagchi would attack the house of Muslim League leader Md. Abdul Matin Saheb and capture Matin Saheb. I was participating in the police station attack battle from Commander Sir's

group. I left Bania Gati shelter at 9 pm. When we reached the police station, the two groups were divided for the target. At 12 midnight, it was decided to attack simultaneously. As per the plan, our group scrolled through the western side of the police station and as soon as they reached the police station, they saw the sentry. The sentry started shooting at us by blowing a whistle and informing everyone in the police station. After that, our group commander Mr. M.A. Mannan gave the command and opened fire. Then everyone started shooting at the same time. The battle lasted for about an hour. The battle was a fierce battle. I had a helmet on my head.

Two bullets hit my helmet. The war commander was positioned on my right side. There was no other way but victory or death. We were all firing like rain. At one stage of the war, the commander, sir, looked at me and said - "Devesh, don't raise your head, keep firing". Losing to our bullets, the police and Razakars of the police station fled behind the police station and went into the Jamuna, out of our range, in a launch on the Sohagpur Jamuna river. The sentry of the police station stopped firing and surrendered. Then we all entered the police station. We had taken all the weapons and ammunition from the police station's warehouse. We had captured two Razakars alive in this war. It was dawn. The group that attacked Matin Saheb's house also came. Matin Saheb had fled. It was not possible to catch him. During the Liberation War, most of the houses and shops had erected the national flag of Bangladesh. People around the police station were flying the flag of Bangladesh in their shops and houses. Having won, we celebrated our victory for some time in the early morning. Then, along with the two captured Razakars, we took shelter in a secluded village in Belkuchi police station. That day, around 11:00 am, several Pakistani soldiers and Razakars from Sirajganj Sadar came to Belkuchi police station. They entered several houses around Belkuchi police station, captured several young men and tortured them.

During the Belkuchi Thana operation, we had captured 2 Razakars. First, the two Razakars were blindfolded in a room of our shelter. I went to their room with the permission of my group commander sir. I entered the room and found out their names and addresses. They requested me to untie our blindfolds. We were in trouble. I untied the blindfolds of the two Razakars. Then I asked them about their background of becoming Razakars. What

they said basically meant that we do not know anything about Razakars. We are poor people. We are married. Our family has a father, mother, wife and children. We joined Razakars thinking that being Razakars is a job. We have never tortured anyone. We have never taken Pakistani soldiers with us and looted any house. We have not set fire to any house. We have not identified the house of any freedom fighter. We work, get paid. We support our families with that money. Please tell everyone and plan to release us. "We will not go back to the Razakars."

Seeing them and hearing their stories made me feel happy. In the afternoon, we all sat and ate together with two Razakars. In the afternoon, I talked to the Commander Sir about their behavior. I requested him to release them. At around 9:00 PM, we sat and ate together with the two Razakars in the shelter. Then we set off to change shelters. On the way, I again requested the Commander Sir to release the two Razakars. Commander Mr. M. A. Mannan Sir was an educated and good man. He gave me permission to release the two Razakars at my request. After making everyone in our group stand on the road, I let the army and our group's fellow soldier, Md. Shamsul Haque Razakars from Daulatpur village, go ahead a little and released them. Finally, I said that you will go straight home. Do not go back to the police station. Do not go to the Razakars. The country will be free in a short time.

2.

Ambush near Kalia Haripur Railway Station: We ambushed near Kalia Haripur Railway Station between Kalia Haripur Railway Station and Jamtail Railway Station. Kalia Haripur is a railway station of Sadar Police Station of Sirajganj district. This ambush was led by Group Commander Mr. M.A. Mannan. On 4 November '71, based on the reconnaissance of Awami League leader Mr. M. Abdul Hamid Talukder, brother-in-law of Mr. M. Motahar Hossain Talukder, M.N.A of Sirajganj of Jhaoil village of the group, we ambushed between Kalia Haripur Railway Station and Jamtail Station. The password for this night was 1. Jawa and Palash. Commander Sir- gave instructions that if we get scattered while fighting with the Pakistani soldiers, we will all gather. At my uncle's village house. Commander Sir had crawled and planted electric mines on the railway line. Group Commander Sir was planning to blow up the train. We were all in position in the rice field. Commander Sir had the mine wire and battery in his hand. Pakistani

militia Shia and Razakars were patrolling the railway line with torch lights and hurricanes. Suddenly our mine wire got separated when they stepped on it. The mine had come to the attention of the Pakistani invaders.
The Pakistani invaders whistled and ordered the Razakars to be ready in the lying position. They kept shining torchlights at us and shouting in Urdu. Meanwhile, a train carrying Pakistani invaders from Ishwardi to Sirajganj arrived. The Pakistani invaders stopped the train at the station by giving a signal. The Pakistani invaders on the train got down with their weapons drawn and started looking for us. It was not possible to blast our mine. Considering the large number of Pakistani invaders and other factors, the Commander Sir ordered a withdrawal. We crawled back some distance and reached Tamai village. The next day, Pakistani invaders and Razakars came from Sirajganj and burned many houses in various villages around Kalia Haripur and tortured many people in the village. We returned from the ambush and gathered at the Commander Sir's house in Tamai village. Commander Sir's mother had arranged food for us. We ate and drank at Commander Sir's house.

After eating and drinking, the commander sir made us all sit down and give a briefing. Several young men who had been trained locally were admitted to our group. It was difficult to take shelter in such a large platoon in one shelter. So, the commander sir decided to make Deputy Commander Rabindranath Bagchi the commander and form another group of a few of us. The commander sir gave instructions and said - from today, the deputy commander of our group, Rabindranath Bagchi, has been nominated as the group commander of my second group. The freedom fighters of the second group will work under the command of Rabindranath Bagchi in my absence. The members of Rabindranath Bagchi's group are freedom fighters from Shahjadpur police station 1. Md. Bazlul Karim Dulal. 2. Nazrul Islam 3. Ratan Kumar Das 4. Debesh Chandra Sanyal and others and Md. Nazrul Islam of Chauhali police station. You will contact our main group and take up positions and stay close to our main group. When necessary, we will join two groups to attack Pakistani army camps, Razakar camps and conduct police station operations. Having decided, we walked together to a village called Kalyanpur.

3.

Kalyanpur Battle: Kalyanpur is a village under Belkuchi police station in Sirajganj district. Commander Mr. M.A. Mannan was the leader of this battle. We took shelter in a school in the village called Kalyanpur under Belkuchi police station. On 5 November 1971, a few local leaders of the village arranged for us to have breakfast. We were tired from sleeping all night and walking. After eating breakfast, we publicly performed PT and paraded under the command of Commander Sir. We cleaned our weapons. We fired full-thru rounds with our weapons. Under the command of Commander Sir, we continued to do duty in pairs. The others remained asleep or resting. Kalyanpur is a secluded village. We thought that Pakistani invaders and Razakars would not come to this village. At around 10 am, fellow soldier Ratan Kumar Das, who was on sentry duty, came running and informed us that some Pakistani invaders, Shias and Razakars were coming from Belkuchi police station to catch us. They were going towards Kalyanpur through the village of Bawra. Two Pakistani agents had come with their faces covered with a towel to show the way to the invaders and Razakars. From a distance, it was estimated that there were 5 Pakistani militiamen and 8 Razakars in this group. Our commander sir decided to fight.

We followed the instructions of Commander Mr. M.A. Mannan Sir. We took up positions in the bamboo thickets like bunkers on the side of Kalyanpur road. Pakistani militia, Razakars and two people who knew the way were coming along the road in front of the bamboo thickets. As soon as we reached our range, Commander Sir gave the command and opened fire. In one leap, the invaders took up positions on the northern side of the road. They were also firing at us. We also started firing like a rain of bullets at the same time. It was a terrible battle of life and death. Hearing the gunfire, the freedom fighter groups stationed in the surrounding villages came forward to help us. A fierce frontal battle was going on for more than an hour. Then the Pakistani invaders retreated. Having won the battle, we were celebrating victory. We met various freedom fighter groups who were helping us. It was seen that several groups, including Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam and Md. Babar Ali's Muktijoddha Group, came to cooperate with us. The confidence of people from all walks of life was strengthened. At around 3:00 PM, a man ran to our commander sir and said, "Several invading soldiers and Razakars from Belkuchi police station and other places are

coming to attack you with heavy weapons. Upon receiving the news, the commander ordered everyone to move to a safe place. On the orders of the commander sir, under the command of Rabindra Nath Bagchi, a few of us walked to Pira Char, Khasiar Char, and other villages and took shelter in the house of our fellow soldier Md. Shamsul Haque in Daulatpur village. The next day, we came to the empty house of Betkandi Mistribari and rested for some time. A leading person named Md. Korap Ali Mollah arranged for us breakfast. We ate and drank there. He requested us to have lunch at his house. But our commander did not agree. We took shelter in the house of a primary school teacher in Dhulauri village. For a few days, we traveled to Daulatpur, Tenashia, we stayed in shelters in Khukni, Bajiarpara, Dargar Char and other villages. Every night, Commander Sir would give us the password. Every morning, we would fire full-thru weapons and give them oil. Every day, we would do reconnaissance in groups to attack Pakistani army camps and Razakar camps.

4.

Dhitpur War: Dhitpur is a village in Shahjadpur police station of Sirajganj district. This war was led by Deputy Commander (appointed as Commander) Babu Rabindra Nath Bagchi. On the night of 12 December 1971, our shelter was in the house of Kala Chakraborty, Akhar Haji and others in Syedpur village. On 13 December 1971 at around 12.00 pm, we received news that the Pakistani invaders were fleeing through Koijuri. The Pakistani invaders were defeated in the Tangail war and had crossed the Jamuna River in a launch and reached the Malipara Razakar camp. From Malipara camp, they were going towards the fence along the Wapda embankment with two Razakars to identify the route. From Koijuri, we pursued the Pakistani soldiers. We were following the Pakistani invaders. Our commander had ordered that if the Pakistani soldiers did not harm our people anymore, we would not say anything to them. They were hungry. They tried to eat radishes from the radish field of someone in Kaijuri village. They probably didn't know that raw radishes can't be eaten. They started moving along the Wapda embankment.

We were also following them, maintaining a safe distance. They were very angry. They were pointing their weapons at us at a place called Dhitpur. We jumped and took up positions on the western side of the Wapda Dam. The

Pakistani invaders were taking up positions on the eastern side of the Wapda Dam. The exchange of fire continued for more than an hour. At the sound of the gunfire, freedom fighters stationed at various places in Shahjadpur, Belkuchi, Chauhali and Bera police stations came forward to help us. Meanwhile, evening approached. The invaders stopped firing. We also stopped firing in the dark. We remained in position without food all night. Our group was under the command of Babu Rabindranath Bagchi. In this battle, I fired three not three rifles. My commander Rabindranath Bagchir was on my left. He was firing an LMG. On my right side were Md. Nazrul Islam of Kadai Badla village, Md. Shamsul Haque of Daulatpur village, Ratan Kumar Das of Pukur Par village. On the right side of our group were SM Amir Hossain's group of Bera police station and other groups. All night long, two Razakars were occasionally firing covering fire. We were also firing two by two in response to their fire. In the morning, our commander and others surrounded the two Razakars and made them surrender. After making the two Razakars surrender, during interrogation, it was learned that after 12.00 midnight, Pakistani soldiers ordered them to fire covering fire and fled towards the fence.

It was later learned that, that night, Pakistani soldiers crossed the Bera River in the boats of the Haldars of Bhera Kola village on the Bera River and fled towards Dhaka via Nagar Bari. In this fierce battle, Md. Abdul Khalek, a 10th grade student of Bera Bibi High School, a resident of Brisalika village in Bera police station, and Md. Amjad Hossain of Chechania village, were seriously injured after being shot. Both were later martyred. That day, two local pedestrians were shot and died during the firing and were lying on the Wapda Dam. Several people from our group and other groups were injured. After winning the Dhitpur battle, we camped at Jamirta High School. On that day, i.e., 14 December '71, Shahjadpur police station was liberated from the invaders. On December 16, 1971, Lieutenant General A.K. Niazi, on behalf of more than ninety thousand Pakistani soldiers, surrendered to our joint forces at Suhrawardy Udyan (then Racecourse Ground) on behalf of all Pakistani soldiers stationed in Bangladesh.

On December 17, a group of Indian planes flew over our Jamirta camp and toured the entire country to see post-war Bangladesh. Our great liberation war was won. Freedom fighter administration was established in

Shahjadpur police station. Md. Abdul Baki Mirza Khokon was nominated as the commander-in-chief of the freedom fighters of Shahjadpur police station and the police station administrator. He used to sit in the CO (Dev) office. He used to bear all the expenses of the freedom fighters of the entire police station from Shahjadpur. On December 18, 1971, I took leave from our camp commander Rabindra Nath Bagchi and left for India in search of my parents. I reached Nawabganj station by train from Ullapara station. Then I crossed the Mahananda river and reached Malda city by bus. From there I went to Malda railway station. It was about 10 pm. When I went to the station, I found out that there was no train to Old Malda before dawn. That night was a bitter winter night. I did not have much money in my pocket. I did not have enough money to stay in a hotel/boarding or to take a reserve vehicle to Old Malda. I was forced to spend the night naked lying on one of my pajamas at the station. I went to Old Malda by morning train. When I reached Pishima's house in Old Malda, I came to know that my parents and others had gone to my younger grandfather Manindra Nath Sanyal's house in Jalpai Guri. My elder grandfather had come to Bangladesh to look for me.

For a few days after 16 December 1971, moving on the roads was risky. Bus lines and other places were bombed by mines or bombs. Many people thought that Pakistani soldiers had left mines, bombs or other explosives buried in the ground on the roads before fleeing so that the buses would explode and kill Bengalis. Even though the roads were so risky, on 18 December 1971, my great-grandfather came to Bangladesh to look for me. Our great-grandmother is like our mother. Our great-grandmother is proof that great-grandmothers are like mothers. At that time, daughters-in-law would not disobey their mother-in-law. Our great-grandmother agreed to send my great-grandfather to look for me despite all the risks. She did not object in any way. At that time, our country did not have mobile phones. I convinced my mother and told my parents to come to Bangladesh, and I returned to Bangladesh the next day. On December 19, the victorious People's Party leader in West Pakistan, Mr. Zul Fikre Ali Bhutto, took power from President and Army Chief Yahya Khan. As President, he released our Father of the Nation from prison on January 8, 1972. On that day, the Father of the Nation left West Pakistan by plane in the morning and landed at Hebron Airport in England in the afternoon. The British Prime Minister

gave a special reception to the Father of the Nation of the Bengalis with special respect. The Father of the Nation left for Bangladesh on January 10 in a special British plane.

On the way to Bangladesh, he stopped in India at the invitation of the President and Prime Minister of India. On 11 January '72, the Father of the Nation issued the Provisional Constitution Ordinance as the President of the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. On 12 January, the new government took charge of the country. As the Prime Minister, the Father of the Nation ordered us to surrender our weapons. On Sunday, 24 January '72, our group surrendered our weapons and ammunition at the temporary weapons surrender camp at Ibrahim Bihari's house in Sirajganj Sadar, in front of the disfigured army officer Mr. Md. Saifullah, and ended our duty in the great liberation war. I returned home empty-handed with the receipt for surrendering our weapons. On the initiative of the government, a National Militia Camp was set up for the rehabilitation and employment of the freedom fighters. I did not get admitted to the National Militia Camp. My parents and all my family returned to our independent country from the refugee camps in India.

On 14 February '72, from the office of the Sirajganj Sub-district Administrator, I received 110/- Taka as arrears of ration and pocket allowance, General Muhammad Ataul Gani and Major Gias Uddin Ahmed, the commander of Sub-Sector No. 7, sealed with the seal of the National Defense Division's Freedom Struggle Certificate No. - 129158 and a white blanket. There was a place for the freedom fighter's signature on the said certificate. A few days later, I got admitted to Shahjadpur Multi-Purpose High School in the ninth grade after taking the TC of the eighth-grade auto-pass from my elder brother Debendra Nath Sanyal M.Com. M.Ed., the headmaster of Ratan Kandi Secondary School. After returning to my family, I learned about my absence from the family from my father, mother and other family members at different times. I learned that my entire family had gone to India after taking a lot of risks and suffering. After arriving in India, he was first admitted to the Manikarchar refugee camp in Assam.

Living and eating in the refugee camp was very difficult. Most of the people were suffering from cholera and other diseases. Sushant Ghosh from our

village died of cholera. The tent allotted by the camp authorities for accommodation did not have enough space. We were forced to rent a room in the house of Vidyaratan Saha in Manikar Char village. My mother often cried. There was a temple in Vidyaratan Saha's house. An old woman in that house said - I can ask the Shri Vigraha of my temple. How is your son? My mother found peace in his words. The next day, I went to the temple with the old woman and prayed to the Shri Vigraha. Tick-tick-tick calls were heard from all sides of the temple. The old woman told my mother - God says your son is fine. My elder brother went to Kolkata with permission from the refugee camp authorities. From Kolkata, he got permission for our family to go to various relatives' houses inside India. Then he went to Kolkata with his entire family, including his father and mother.

Our two uncles Ashok Chakraborty and Alok Chakraborty met with others. They went to Kali Ghat in Kolkata. They offered prayers to the goddess Kali at Kali Ghat for me. There is Hanuman there. My mother goddess cried a lot for me after seeing a Hanuman giving birth to her child. I came home after winning the great liberation war and came to know that my elder brother and younger brother were about to die in a boat sinking because of me. Mother goddess had called me for dinner half an hour after I left for India. After not finding me, she had searched and found out that a boat had left for India from Paleder Beel Ghat for the liberation war trainees. Mother goddess started crying for me. At that time, my elder brother and younger brother along with some people from the village, Md. Bajlu Pal, had taken a boat and gone to the house of M.P.A. Saheb in Shahjadpur to bring me back. I was not found there.

While returning, the boat sank in the Karatoya River in Shahjadpur. Since my brother was young, everyone went to save him. Then my brother said - “I know how to swim, my elder brother does not know how to swim. Save my elder brother.” Everyone swam over the boat and saved my elder brother and younger brother. Our younger brother Soumendra Nath Sanyal was a brotherly devotee like Sri Lakshman, the brother of Lord Sri Sri Ram Chandra. Without thinking about his own life or death, he requested everyone to save his elder brother. On January 20, our parents and other family members came home. Elder brother had come home earlier. Md. Hossain Ali of the village happily returned to the house and everything in

the house even though he did not get the money he had given to buy the house back. Elder brother had gone to the Jamirta camp and brought me. Seeing me near, my parents and the entire family became emotional with joy. Mother Goddess hugged me and shed tears of joy for some time. Mother Goddess did not allow me to enter the house at first. Mother Goddess told me - Father, we have prepared a manusha for you in our Kali house. First, I will give Harilut to the temple of Sri Sri Kali Mata with your hands and then bring it home. I stood in front of the house for some time.

My younger brother Shamen and sister Dulali, on the instructions of my parents, quickly bought batasa from the shop to give to the poor. Then my mother goddess took me to Sri Sri Kali's house. She gave me the poor by hand. Then everyone happily brought me home. The day our family came home from India, our neighbor Md. Bajlu Pal had given rice, dal and other food to all our family. That night, our family had dinner with rice, daul and other food given by Md. Bajlu Pal. The next day, after bowing to my parents and others, I returned to Jamirta camp again. Because arms and other things have been issued in my name. My duty will not be over until all these arms and ammunition are submitted to the government. I heard from Pitreedev that everyone in the family had reached home at around 11.00 pm on 20 January '72. One night, while staying at the Manikar Char refugee camp, my brother Samarendra Nath Sanyal had a nightmare. In my dream, I saw myself eating bread at the table.

Seeing the dream, Mejda burst into tears in the bedroom. Mejda's crying woke up everyone, including my mother goddess. Mother goddess went to Mejda and said - what happened? Mejda said that brother Devesh had come. My brother wanted to eat bread from me. I told my brother - brother, my parents have gone crazy because of you. You stay. After hearing the dream from Mejda, my mother goddess also burst into tears. She said - then Devesh may have died in the Liberation War. Devesh's disembodied spirit came to eat bread. My elder sister Mrs. Rekha Rani Sanyal once told me about an incident during her stay at the Manikar Char refugee camp - the incident is - my father used to smoke bidi. One day my sister saw - our father god was sitting in a sad mood. My sister thought about one Devesh's worries, leaving his people in two countries, and the financial hardship

here. There is no way to earn money. Lack of money. Aunty had some of her handiwork, pictures of Sri Sri Gopal idols, clothes, seats, and others.

My grandmother gave all the money she earned by selling those handicrafts in the refugee camp to her father. My grandmother thought - at least my father-in-law should not lack money to buy bidis. My younger brother Soumendra Nath Sanyal (Shamen) said one day - I cried a lot for you after you went to the Liberation War. Since my elder brother's school was closed, he used to buy kerosene oil from Baghabari and take it with Alam Kaka to Enayetpur to sell kerosene oil. I would take a donga. At a ghat near Enayetpur, my elder brother and Alam Kaka would make me sit on a donga and sell kerosene oil. I would sit alone on the donga and cry. I thought that if Devesh Da was there, I would not have to fulfill this responsibility. Devesh Da would fulfill this responsibility or we two brothers would fulfill it. One day, Majda Samarendra Nath Sanyal said that the day we set off from home by boat to India, Md. Korban Ali Sarkar of the village stopped our boat in the Paleder Beel.

Md. Qorban Ali Sarkar was a member of the managing committee of Ratan Kandi Adarsh Lower Secondary School. He told his elder brother - you go and pay the school's accounts. He said - you cannot leave without paying the school's accounts. Seeing this situation in the Paleder Beel, the neighboring Md. Akbar Ali Pramanik and others came forward. Md. Akbar Ali Pramanik said - "Let them go". When the country becomes independent, he will return to the country and pay all the accounts. Everyone agreed with Md. Akbar Ali Pramanik's words. Md. Qorban Ali Sarkar had left our boat. Then we took the boat and got off near Balabari village of Belkuchi police station and went to Dhukuria Bera. Then we set off on foot towards Mukund Gati village of Belkuchi police station, the house of our elder brother. After crossing Dhukuria Bera market, some young men came and took our bicycle. Later, with the help of some good people of that village, the bicycle was returned. Going to India was very risky. The broker who would take us to India. He was not finding the courage for some days. We rented two rooms in a house in Bania Ganti village for a few days. Then, as suggested by the broker, we reached Manikarchar Ghat in India by boat.

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